

Sample Dialogue: When the Parent Raises a Conflict

Parent: *I don't want Nicole to play with water. It's a big mess and her clothes are getting soaking wet.*

Teacher: *It sounds like you are concerned about Nicole getting wet. Can you tell me more?* (Listening and asking open-ended question)

Parent: *Well, she has been getting ear infections every other month and I hate for her to get cold and wet, because I think it is too much for her little body.*

Teacher: *Seems like you feel really concerned about her health, and you feel that getting cold and wet makes her sick.* (Actively listening and restating parent's ideas to confirm that you have heard the concern)

Parent: *Yes, I know the doctor says that getting cold and wet can't make you sick, but it seems like every time she plays with water, she gets sick again.*

Teacher: *So it appears to you that Nicole's getting ear infections is related to her water play.* (Reframing parent's idea.)

Parent: *Yes*

Teacher: *This is kind of a challenge for us because sensory activities like water play are an important part of our curriculum. In my experience, children learn physical skills, science, math and measuring skills as well as social skills when they are playing in the water. Water play is one of our standard activities, and Nicole is one of the kids who really love it.* (Stating your position or ideas and giving child development information). *At the same time I'm concern that Nicole stays well.* (Finding common ground).

Parent: *Yes, I just wish her ears weren't so sensitive.*

Teacher: *I wonder if we could think together about some solutions to keep Nicole healthy and also provide these important play experiences for her.* (Defining problem and inviting solutions)

Parent: *Yes, I don't really want her to stop her wonderful play. Do you have anything that could keep her dry while she is playing?*

Teacher: *We do have plastic aprons. We could make sure she has one on every time she plays in the water. We also have other dry pouring activities that we could put out more often, which would give her man of the same experiences but would allow her to stay dry.*

Parent: *I could also send two sets of extra clothes. Would you be willing to change her quickly is she does end up getting wet?*

Teacher: *Sure, I'll let the other teachers know that she needs to wear an apron and be changed as soon as she gets wet. We will also talk about our sensory curriculum to make sure we have a balance of dry as well as wet pouring activities available. (Choosing solutions)*

Parent: *Thank you. I feel much better now that I feel we are working together to keep her healthy.*

Teacher; *I also want to thank you for bringing this issue to me. It is so important that we know when you are concerned about something, and I appreciate the opportunity to work together with you on solutions. (Thanking the parent) Let's check back with each other next week to see how things are going. (Setting up a time to check back to see how things are working-out)*